

### THE PIC-NIC SEASON.

Winter, cold winter, you're coming at last ;  
Summer, bright summer, you're gone to the past.  
Our pic-nics are over until the next year,  
But the coal-man's and plumber's are fearfully near.

W. H. J.

### APROPOS OF QUEBEC.

What's all this rout,  
What's the trouble about !  
Why the Grits are in and the Tories are out.  
What change will it make ?  
Will the country all break ?  
Oh ! ho, but great principles now are at stake.

Great principals ! what  
Great ones have they got ?  
Whether Riel was righteously hanged or not.

Oh, I see, yes, I see,  
Grits will let him go free !  
Well, not quite—for he now is as dead as can be.



Two very different subjects have of late been agitating the public breast—revivalism and politics ; the former in the shape of "Sam" Jones, the latter in the shape of the Quebec elections. These things bring to one's mind other public nuisances. Of such the country has none too few, and we, in the fair Toronto of which we think so much, have more than our share—perhaps it is because we aspire so high that we suffer so much.

\* \* \*

Chief among such nuisances is the theatre nuisance. The Athens of Canada is pestered and made miserable by her very devotees. Those attracted to her shrine through love of learning are themselves the culprits. Like thoughtless babes they belabour the (*alma*) mother who gives them nourishment.

\* \* \*

At what am I driving, askest thou, reader ? Ha ! Knowest thou not the "gods" ? Hast never heard them ? I address not the deaf reader ; he probably is unaware of their existence, for, thanks to their being relegated to superior regions, they assail not our other senses. But if reader, thou art cursed with the possession of an auditory apparatus together with a taste for the play, I need not tell thee at what I am driving.

\* \* \*

Amongst the lower animals, we are told, there is an ineradicable love of show—or rather of showing off. To this instinct, indeed, *teste* Darwin, do we ourselves owe, not only our existence, but also our superiority to the brute creation. Through long ages of "natural selection," by which the gayest and most beautiful survived and propagated by showing off his gaiety and his beauty, have we at last arrived at *homo sapiens*.

\* \* \*

The instinct seems still to exist. Of this fact the gallery alluded to gives abundant and frequent evidence. Its inhabitants, unable to appeal to the eye, owing to their secluded position, and forced to find some vent to their simioid proclivities, are obliged to resort to the only channel left open to them—their throats ; and these they use to the very best of their ability.

It must not be supposed that they merely give utterance to sounds. No, they endeavour to enhance the effects of the atmospheric undulations caused by the vibrations of their vocal cords by what with them goes by the name of "wit." To those ignorant of the signification attached by them to this word one instance may be given : If, for example, a pathetic tragedy is brought to a close by a kiss bestowed by a dying wife or lover, a long-drawn imitation of the benediction together with the ejaculation of the word "Yum" once repeated is "wit."

\* \* \*

In the same building, however, and exhibited by the very persons who decry loudly the misdeeds of the dwellers in the etherial regions, is found another example of the same "showing off" instinct. (The perversity of the human heart !) It differs from the method employed by those above them (topographically speaking merely, that is) in that it appeals not to the ear but to the eye. Which is worse I know not, for both most sadly interfere with the enjoyment the common-sense individual expects to derive from the stage. The one drowns the voice of the actor ; the other hides him from view.

\* \* \*

This second public nuisance takes the following form :—Should the individuals referred to possess the wherewith to purchase conspicuous seats ; should their incomes enable them to clothe themselves in purple and fine linen, to bedizen themselves in costly garments and bedeck themselves with flowers, their earnest desire is to proclaim the fact. This they do, and thus : They are scrupulously careful to arrive late ; they take great precautions to make themselves ignorant of the locality of their seats, in order that they may the longer be exposed to the public gaze ; they occupy much time in divesting themselves of such wraps as custom has decreed shall only be exposed to public view during their progress down the centre aisle with the same object ; and they are careful to commence their re-investment with the wraps long ere the time for this has arrived. These and other similar devices they employ. It is the same instinct after all. Why should they complain of the modes employed by their fellow-showers-off ?

\* \* \*

This instinct, strange to say, has been named by some "vulgarity." But surely this is far too strong a term by which to designate it. Have we not been told that it is by means of this instinct that mankind happens at present to be mankind and not brutekind ? Only by possessing something to show off,—be it a silk dress or a powerful voice—and only by showing it off, is evolution possible. Can it be that all art, all civilization, owe their existence to "vulgarity" ? Well, even if they do, it would be well now and again that the progress of both art and civilization should for a brief period be stayed in their course in order that those who have nothing to show off might once in a while enjoy the play they have paid to see.

*A.A.*

*First Bank Cashier* : Yes, I was getting along splendidly ; had things down to a system, you know. Nobody would ever have suspected me. *Second Ditto*—But you were caught all the same ; and now you are going away for your health, I understand. *First Ditto*—Yes, have to do it ; my system got "run down."